

Mr. LEVIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SIoux FALLS COUGARS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the University of Sioux Falls Cougars football team for winning the 2006 NAIA National Football Championship. I would also like to recognize their coach, Kalen DeBoer, for being named the NAIA Football Coach of the Year. The Cougars championship victory in December marked the second national football title for the school in the past 10 years.

This group of young men had an extraordinary season capped by a 23-to-19 victory over the previously unbeaten University of Saint Francis. That championship victory ensured the Cougars an undefeated season and the first football title since 1996. The University of Sioux Falls did not achieve a No. 1 ranking throughout the entirety of the 2006 season. Their championship was won on the field, not in the polls.

Coach DeBoer was able to achieve this victory in just his second year as head coach of the Cougars. He succeeded legendary coach Bob Young. Under the tutelage of Coach Young, and continued now by Coach DeBoer, the University of Sioux Falls has emerged as one of the premier football institutions in the country. Over the past 10 seasons, the Cougars have amassed a 103 to 19 record while capturing eight conference titles. Faith, loyalty, commitment, and teamwork have served as the foundation to building this tradition of excellence.

The 2006 Cougars were led to the title thanks to the work of an explosive offense and a powerful defense. They averaged nearly 39 points per game while allowing only seven. Leading the way for the Cougars this season were Chad Cavender, Mike Dvoracek, Dusty Hovorka, and Trey Erickson. These four were selected to the first-team of the 2006 NAIA All-American football team. This marks the first time in University of Sioux Falls history that four players have represented the school on the first-team. Also, five Cougars earned NAIA All-American honorable mention honors. These players were Zach Campbell, Josiah Fenceroy, Jason Glasco, Letarius Lee, and Adam Paulson.

Many of the players from this year's team have spent the last 4 years as teammates. The sixteen current University of Sioux Falls seniors have compiled a remarkable 48 to 4 record, including three Great Plains Athletic Conference championships, four NAIA Championship Series appearances, and the 2006 NAIA Football Championship. This group of student-athletes should

be very proud of their impressive accomplishments over the past years.

The coaching staff, in alphabetical order, is as follows: Jon Anderson, Adam Breske, Al Christensen, Kalen DeBoer, Jeff Fitzgerald, Nick Fulton, Tom Grogan, Al Hansen, Chuck Morrell, Nate Moser, and Kurtiss Riggs.

The team, in alphabetical order, is as follows: Blake Andersen, Alex Anderson, Drew Anderson, Kyle Anderson, Jeremy Barnes, Bret Beachner, Nick Benedetto, Trevor Bowers, Curtis Brown, Tyson Brown, Zach Campbell, Doug Carlson, Luke Castle, Chad Cavender, Max Chapman, Erik Cimpl, Ross Cimpl, Kyle Cummings, Josh Daniels, Drew DeGroot, Dan DeJong, Glen Dirksen, Kyle Dreckman, Michael Dvoracek, Ernest Eaton, Brett Elgersma, Trey Erickson, Nate Everett, Josiah Fenceroy, Clint Fischer, Jason Glasco, Aaron Gunderson, Mike Hartley, Luke Hartman, Nick Haub, Adam Henglefeld, Trevor Holleman, Cameron Horton, Dusty Hovorka, Aaron Jensen, Gregg Jensen, James Johnikin, Matt Johnson, Joel Kelp, Kyle Kidd, Blake Klinsing, Brandon Koolstra, Todd Kutter, Ty Larson, Letarius Lee, John Lentz, Matt Lindgren, Tyler Lodermeier, Ryan Lowmiller, Brad Maag, Lane Mellegaard, Matt Miller, Dan Moe, Joe Moen, Tyler Mousel, A.J. Munger, Scott Neu, Tyler Newman, Matt Norgaard, Jeff Nuzum, Chris Opitz, Cody O'Reilly, Aaron Parker, Adam Paulson, Adam Perry, Weston Peterson, Darren Quaile, Nick Ramstad, Jim Rawhouser, Kyle Robertson, Jon Ross, Jon Ryan, Dan Schmeichel, Shawn Schnabel, Andrew Schoenfelder, Brady Schwebach, Brandon Sexton, George Sperry, Alex Staebell, Dominic Studzinski, Robb Tiff, D.J. Tille, Chad Traver, Brent Tuxhorn, Brooks Underberg, Derek Varin, Josh Veurink, Michael Warren, Keegan Warwick, T.J. Wendt, Ben Westerfield, Brandon Williams, and Alex Woolbright.

I congratulate the men who won this National Championship and the coaches who led the way. The University of Sioux Falls football team has proven that they are strong competitors and dedicated athletes. On behalf of the city of Sioux Falls and the state of South Dakota, I am pleased to say congratulations, Cougars. You have made us all very proud.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 470

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it now be in order to proceed to Calendar No. 19, S. 470.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WEBB). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIPARTISAN IRAQ LEGISLATION— MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the bill and send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 19, S. 470, Bipartisan Iraq legislation.

Carl Levin, Joe Biden, Ken Salazar, Harry Reid, Pat Leahy, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Robert Menendez, John F. Kerry, B.A. Mikulski, Dick Durbin, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Dianne Feinstein, Bill Nelson, H.R. Clinton, Herb Kohl, Ben Nelson.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote on the motion to proceed occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, that the mandatory quorum be waived, and that if cloture is invoked, it be in order to file cloture on the bill before the close of business on Tuesday next.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the contribution of the Roman Catholic school system in the United States. From January 28 through February 2 of this year, communities across our Nation celebrated National Catholic Schools Week. This year's theme of "Catholic Schools: the Good News in Education" emphasizes the balanced and diverse educational perspective offered by Catholic education.

With more than 8,000 elementary and secondary schools across our Nation, Catholic education is an important part of educational communities across our country. My home State of Nevada is no exception. We have more than 16 Catholic schools that serve over 5,000

students. These schools play an important role in their communities, teaching service and character to their students in the Catholic tradition.

This tradition is what encourages many parents to sacrifice to pay for a Catholic education. As many students, parents, and teachers will tell you, a Catholic education provides balance to students not only in their educational experience, but also in their spiritual life. The values taught in Catholic schools are important for developing engaged and informed members of the community.

Catholic education has played a needed role in our educational system for more than a century. I am confident that Nevada and our Nation will be well served by Catholic schools for many years to come.

ANNIVERSARY OF ALASKA STATEHOOD

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, January marked the 48th anniversary of the day Alaska achieved statehood. Earlier this week, Senator MURKOWSKI and I introduced S.J. Res. 49, a resolution commemorating our State's 50th anniversary. We will reach this milestone on January 3, 2009.

Alaska's path to statehood was a long one. In 1867, Secretary of the Treasury William Seward convinced President Andrew Johnson to purchase Alaska for \$7.2 million. At the time, this purchase was often derided as "Seward's Folly," and many wondered what the United States would do with what some called its new "Polar Bear Garden."

While history shortly proved the critics wrong, statehood for Alaska did not come easily. It took more than 90 years for Alaska to become a state. The first Alaska statehood bill was introduced by James Wickersham, our territorial delegate, in 1916. Over the years, seven Congresses considered legislation regarding Alaska's admission to our Union. Between 1946 and 1957 alone, statehood hearings held by the House and Senate spanned more than 3,500 pages in the printed record.

Alaskans tirelessly advocated for statehood. On November 8, 1955, 55 men and women assembled at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks for Alaska's Constitutional Convention. These delegates worked for 75 days, and their efforts produced a precedent-setting constitution.

Thanks to the dedication of George Lehleitner of Louisiana and C.W. Bill Snedden, the publisher of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, our constitution included Alaska's version of the "Tennessee Plan". Under this plan, our territory elected a congressional delegation without federal approval. Our constitution—and this plan—ultimately became the basis for congressional approval of statehood.

Alaskans also made countless trips to Washington, DC, to testify in support of statehood. These visits were

critical to our success—in 1957, the House Insular Affairs Committee reported, "Alaska is in all ways ready for statehood."

Forty-two years after the introduction of the first statehood bill, our long wait finally ended. On May 12, 1958, Representative Clair Engle moved to bring the Alaska statehood bill to the floor of the House. He sought and received a special privileged status which is reserved for statehood bills. This status allowed him to circumvent the Rules Committee, which had blocked statehood legislation for more than 11 months.

Right up until the end, statehood for Alaska faced fierce opposition. In the Senate, a small group of opponents prolonged the debate for 5 long days and nights. I was among the many Alaskans who gathered in the viewing galleries above this Chamber on June 30, 1958, waiting for the historic vote. At 8:02 pm, the Senate passed the Alaska statehood bill by a vote of 64 to 20. Six months later, on January 3, 1959, we officially became the 49th State in the Union.

I come to the floor today to pay tribute to the Alaskans who fought for statehood and our good friends in Congress who supported them. Bob Bartlett, our State's delegate in the House, worked on statehood for 14 years. He was assisted by men like Leo O'Brien of New York, who chaired the Territories Subcommittee; John Saylor of Pennsylvania, who led the floor fight for Republican supporters; Clair Engle of California, who chaired the Insular Affairs Committee; and Sam Rayburn, the Speaker of the House.

In the Senate, Alaskans found a good friend in Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington State, who was chairman of Territories on the Interior Committee. Senator Jackson helped plan the successful strategy that put the vote for statehood over the top. Twenty-five years later, Senator Jackson cosponsored a resolution celebrating the silver anniversary of Alaska's statehood. Earlier this week, Senator MURKOWSKI and I offered a similar resolution, this time to commemorate our State's golden anniversary in 2009.

Alaskans also found many good friends outside of the Halls of Congress. President Eisenhower, President Truman, and Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton each supported our campaign for statehood. It was my great privilege to know and serve with many of these men. I am particularly indebted to Secretary Seaton, who asked me to serve as his legislative counsel, Assistant to the Secretary, and ultimately the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior during the Eisenhower administration. These positions gave me the opportunity to work on the Alaska Statehood Act.

History has proven those who criticized Seward's purchase—and those who opposed statehood—wrong. When William Seward purchased Alaska from Russia, he paid \$7,200,000—less than 2

cents per acre. With the full rights and opportunities granted to the states in our Union, Alaska has more than made good on this investment—the Federal revenue from the development of our resources has repaid this investment hundreds of times over.

The list of our State's opportunities remains promising. We have vast coal reserves and enormous potential in oil and gas both on and off our shores. Trillions of feet of gas hydrates lie beneath our permafrost. Our State's 34,000 miles of shoreline are the gateway to some of our Nation's most promising tidal and ocean energy prospects. Our forests contain much of the Nation's timber and pulp. Sixty percent of our country's commercial fish harvest is caught in the waters off of our State's shores.

Our geographic location was a vital asset during World War II and the Cold War, and it continues to offer our Armed Forces important strategic advantages. Our location has also helped boost our Nation's trade with Canada, Russia, and nations throughout Asia.

Our State's greatest resource, however, will always be our people. Alaskans are resourceful, enterprising, and fiercely independent. Our pioneer spirit runs deep. And the traditions and heritage of our Alaska Native people have greatly contributed to our country's cultural life.

The list of our State's opportunities is long, but we are still a young State. For each of our opportunities, there is a challenge to overcome. The Federal Government owns more than 60 percent of our lands. We have only 14,000 miles of roads. Seventy percent of our towns, villages, and cities can be reached only by boat or air. If we are to fulfill our potential, we will need greater understanding of these facts.

Forty-eight years is not a long time. In fact, our State is younger than all but eight of the Members who serve in this Senate. Our ability to fulfill our potential depends on the willingness of those who serve in Congress to provide us with the opportunities and support given to other States when they were in similar stages of their development.

On this anniversary of statehood, Alaskans honor those who made this milestone possible. And we share our hope that—once again—we will find friends in Congress and elsewhere that will help us fulfill our State's potential.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the rules adopted on January 31, 2007, by the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: